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ABSTRACT

The primary job of parents is to ensure safe passage for their children from infancy through adolescence to adulthood. Research has indicated many things schools can do to turn the privilege of safe passage into a right. Three research-based programs that work to achieve safe passage are described. The first is Caring Connection, a "one-stop-shop" for youth services at a high school in Marshalltown (Iowa). The second is the Quantum Opportunities Program, an innovative 4-year, year-round program in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) that provides learning, youth development, and community service opportunities, along with summer jobs, for youth from disadvantaged families. The third program, The Academy for Peace and Justice, operated by El Puente, a community organization in Brooklyn (New York), is an academically and developmentally focused school with strong connections with the community. The experiences of these programs and other successful initiatives are used to model the "safe passage school," an imaginary prototype urban middle school. The 1,000 students of the school are divided into five separate "houses," in which students stay together for 3 years. Basic core courses are shaped to fit with the specialized house themes. The school is characterized by a support system with needed services provided on site. The active promotion of parent participation and after-school activities are additional features of the model. The vision of the safe passage school encompasses almost all aspects of successful programs, integrated into a student-teacher-family-centered institution. Some suggestions are given for turning the vision of the safe passage school into a reality. Seventeen publications and 16 organizations are listed for additional information. (SLD)

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SAFE PASSAGE:

Making it Through Adolescence in a Risky Society

UDO 32637

NCREL

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Dear Colleague:

Children today – especially those in distressed environments – face enormous obstacles in their journey through adolescence to adulthood. The statistics on gang violence, drug abuse, failing schools, and teen pregnancy are powerful reminders that too many of our nation's youth do not succeed in this oftentimes hazardous transition. Yet, there is good news to share – news about programs and strategies that schools and communities can adopt to ensure that more and more of our children pass safely through adolescence and become healthy, productive adults.

In order to spread the promising news of programs and strategies that work in the real world, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) is proud to present an abridged version of a new book by Joy G. Dryfoos, *Safe Passage: Making it Through Adolescence in a Risky Society – What Parents, Schools, and Communities Can Do.*

Child advocate Joy Dryfoos presents an illustrative vision of a Safe Passage School, which may serve as a guide as you develop your own vision, programs, and strategies to ensure the safe passage of children and youth in your community. She also presents descriptions of three successful Safe Passage programs in the United States:

- Caring Connection in the Marshalltown, Iowa, School District
- The Quantum Opportunities Program in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- El Puente in Brooklyn, New York

At NCREL, we are committed to bringing the best in educational research and development to schools and communities in the Midwest. This publication is but one of many resources – print and electronic – available from your regional laboratory to help you make informed decisions and implement changes so that all children achieve success in school and in life.

We wish you success in your school and community development efforts. Let us know in the enclosed evaluation card about other ways we can support your efforts. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jeri Nowakowski
Executive Director

Lynn J. Stinnette
Director,
Center for School
and Community Development

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Parents the world over want assurance that their children will be able to grow into responsible adults who can enter the labor force, become effective parents, and participate in the social and political life of the society. That is, after all, the parents' primary job: to ensure safe passage to their offspring, from infancy through adolescence to adulthood.

The barriers to safe passage are profound. The twenty-first century will be launched in the United States under precarious social conditions – growing poverty, crime, urban disarray, family separations, rural isolation, limits on employment opportunity, and racial enmity. Nor is our country isolated from the effects of turmoil in the rest of the world – bloody ethnic conflicts, starvation, mass migrations, weapons proliferation, the AIDS epidemic, and faltering economies. Even the worldwide environment appears to be entering a period of agitation, where harmful air, warming seas, and destructive hurricanes presage things to come.

Even at best, safe passage is not a guaranteed right. It is a privilege. Suburban children growing up in Hastings-on-Hudson, where I live, have higher odds for future success than the disadvantaged children growing up in the contiguous city of Yonkers. Yet not every child in Hastings will make it, nor is every disadvantaged child in Yonkers a potential failure.

WHAT'S REQUIRED FOR SAFE PASSAGE?

I believe that it is possible to spell out in great detail all the work that has to be done to turn the privilege of safe passage into a right. The requirements and experiences of contemporary youth have been well documented. One group of renowned researchers boiled it down to, "What young people really need on a daily basis is safe places, challenging experiences, and caring people." Parents are, of course, central to the process of providing safe passage, but many cannot overcome the obstacles in the way of their children's development without substantial help. Schools and the people who work in them are key elements in this safe passage movement, but they cannot assume the entire responsibility for raising children in today's society. All the major institutions of our society have to be working toward the same goal, starting with the schools and involving a whole array of community agencies. We need to focus on practices and programs that foster the healthy development of youth, on interventions that make a difference in the lives of young people.

We have access to successful models of parenting, schools, and communities; we know how to teach, counsel, and promote social skills; we have experience with connecting young people to the labor force. We don't need rocket scientists to show us how to put the pieces together to create schools and form comprehensive programs that work.

THREE SUCCESSFUL SAFE PASSAGE PROGRAMS

To single out any one program and designate it as exemplary is not a simple assignment. So many excellent efforts are going on around the country. Here are three that provide evidence that they can assure safe passage by promoting educational outcomes, preventing problem behaviors, and demonstrating high expectations for youth.

Caring Connection

Go 60 miles out of Des Moines, Iowa, past vast rolling acres of cornfields and fertile farmland, and you come to Marshalltown – what must be "middle America." A glimpse of the Marshalltown Community High School, set in a huge campus with new buildings, furthers the impression of well-being. But a visit with folks at the Caring Connection quickly changes these first impressions as one listens to the staff describe the range of interventions they feel they must provide for

The strongest argument for intervention is that the country as a whole will benefit if all children are assured safe passage. Your children will have a much better chance of living in a viable society if other people's children are able to participate as workers, parents and citizens.

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Marshalltown youth. The community is changing rapidly with declining industry and an influx of disadvantaged Hispanic and Southeast Asians families. In at least one school in Marshalltown, 82 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

In order to respond to the problems of a shifting population, Marshalltown School District initiated the Caring Connection, a K-12 program that brings together the efforts of 13 local and state agencies to "nurture students to become intellectually and personally empowered for citizenship in a changing world." The Caring Connection, under the direction of Todd Redalen, provides services in the high school as well as six elementary and two middle schools and an alternative high school. This program is supported by a state grant for School-Based Youth Services as well as funds made available through Iowa's unique "allowable growth" provisions in the state education law. School districts are permitted to use their funds to develop special projects for high-risk youth, and Marshalltown has dedicated $600,000 yearly for these purposes. In the Marshalltown High School, Caring Connection acts as a "one-stop shop." One whole corner of the first floor of the school is taken up with the program's facilities. A number of private offices ring the reception area

adjacent to a large conference room. A well-equipped, specially designed classroom for tutoring is located on another floor.

The Caring Connection actually offers 20 different services through contractual arrangements with local agencies including mental health and substance abuse counseling, family development, juvenile court liaison, runaway and independent living support, legal services, primary health care, service learning, and job training and placement. The staff is made up of 27 individuals, almost all of whom work for a participating agency rather than the school system. Many different kinds of specialists are available through the agency contracts. A Family Development worker from Mid-Iowa Community Action does crisis intervention, works with families as a case manager, and facilitates support groups in the

school. The Mental Health Center supplies a part-time therapist and the Substance Abuse Treatment Unit does assessments, counseling, treatment, and follow-up.

The tutoring program is intensive, with a special room – an Individual Assistance Center – equipped with computers and on-site tutors who can devote considerable attention to students who are having problems in their classrooms. Joshua, a reticent 16-year-old, reported, "I can concentrate much better in here and the teacher goes to the trouble to explain things that I just can't get in my regular class."

The Caring Connection staff works in conjunction with other professionals both in the school and in the community. One of the social workers said, "You'd be surprised how much everyone wants to know more about things like mental health problems, substance abuse treatment, parent involvement, literacy programs, and the use of case managers. The teachers in this school are always eager to talk to us." Another remarked, "Many of the parents in this community can't cope with their children. We have to spend a lot of time visiting with them and acting as liaison between the school and the home."

Every student who participates in Caring Connection is informed of options for completing high school. Some students are able to attend school for shorter hours to accommodate employment, teen parenting, or other reasons. A self-paced curriculum is available through the Individual Assistance Center to help students make up credit deficiencies. Special courses entitled Community Living Skills and Vocational Skills are offered with flexible schedules. Modified school-within-school courses in English, World Cultures, Speech, and Composition are available for students with a history of low achievement. Students are allowed to leave classrooms to have access to the school-based agency providers during the school day.

More than 1,000 students are served in this program every year. Evaluation data show a reduction in the dropout rate and evidence of attracting former dropouts back into the school system. Among students who were at high risk of dropping out, those who made more than 25 contacts during the year with Caring Connection had a dropout rate of 3 percent compared to 8 percent among those with few contacts. A survey of students and parents showed very positive assessments of the program and the school, with 75 percent or more reporting better attendance and performance in school, reduction in use of substances, going on to college, not engaging in unprotected sex, and improved relationships with peers and family.

"I can concentrate much better in here and the teacher goes to the trouble to explain things that I just can't get in my regular class."

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"She is just like a second mother to me. I will never forget this lady. She's been such a big part of my life. I don't think she really understands how much she means to me. This lady is God's angel. She works and works and stays on my case about sex, school, and life – period.

Caring Connection is an excellent example of a comprehensive program heavily supported both by the local school system and by the State Department of Education. The school superintendent and the school board are strongly committed to community schools and actively seek the involvement of every resource in town. Marshalltown exemplifies the "art of the possible" – all sectors of the community coming together to strengthen the capacity of the school system to produce strong and well-educated people.

Quantum Opportunities Program

The Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP) is located in Philadelphia at the national headquarters of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America (OIC), a major job-training agency. According to its designers – Benjamin Lattimore, Director of Literacy Programs, OIC, and Robert Taggart, President of Remediation and Training Institute – QOP is an innovative four-year, year-round program that provides learning, youth development, and community service opportunities, along with summer jobs, to small groups of youth from disadvantaged families. QOP is based on the theory that intensive and varied interventions are necessary to make a difference in young people's lives, and that the adults who deliver these services must be both nurturing and tough. Financial incentives further the chances for success. As Ben Lattimore puts it, "How do you treat your own kids? You reward them when they behave well, and punish them when they don't. It's a simple idea, and certainly not novel. But it works."

At the national level, QOP was launched as a five-site demonstration project in 1989 with support from the Ford Foundation. An evaluation by Andrew Hahn of Brandeis University revealed that QOP members, when compared to similar students who did not participate in the project, were more likely to graduate, go to college, not become parents while in school, and were doing much better with their lives than would be expected.

According to Hahn, "QOP debunks the myth that nothing works for economically disadvantaged, minority adolescents. QOP's key finding is that these young people will stick with the program, especially if the adults stick with them. In one site . . . 24 of the original 25 youth were still actively involved at the end of the four-year cycle."

Based on the pilot results, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Ford Foundation are supporting new programs at seven sites, one of which is Philadelphia. This after-school effort is coordinated by Deborah Scott, Manager of Literacy Programs for OIC. Fifty 9th-grade students were selected as

participants from Benjamin Franklin High School and another 50 as a control group. The expectations are that over the four-year period, each participant will receive 250 hours of education by participating in computer-assisted instruction, peer tutoring, and homework assistance; 250 hours of service activities by participating in community service projects, helping on public events, or holding regular jobs; and 250 hours of development activities such as life and family skills training, planning for college and jobs, and joining in family and community recreation. The basic tool used is the Comprehensive Competencies Program encompassing several hundred units of computerized courses, covering K-12 basic subjects as well as career and personal skills. The facility is open from 2 to 7 p.m. weekdays, and generally from 10 to mid-afternoon on Saturdays for special events. The site is organized with at least one computer for every three students and individual records for each participant.

One student, Andre, reported on his experience: "Every day when I come here, I can check in and see how far I've come. I had to start with fourth-grade arithmetic but I've already moved up to eighth grade."

The expectation is that each student will receive a lot of tender loving care from the staff of three full-time counselors, all of whom wear beepers and have 800 numbers so the participants can contact them at any time. Deborah Scott describes QOP as a "tough love" program. Students and parents must sign a four-year "contract" with QOP committing themselves to the program.

One of the hallmarks of the QOP program is that the participants earn stipend money – up to $5,000 by the end of the four-year program – which serves not only as an incentive for participation, but as a means of teaching money management skills. The students love coming to the center. As Paul, an oversized 14-year-old, put it, "I usually cut my last class at school so I can get here early. I wish I could come to QOP all day long since I don't really learn nothing in school. We hardly get any homework. I learn a lot in this place. I love working with the computers."

QOP is an exciting and common-sense (albeit expensive) program where technology, education, counseling, caring, and evaluation are brought together to achieve the best results for targeted at-risk students. The careful design and controlled evaluation have produced an invaluable tool for practitioners who want to dramatically influence the lives of very disadvantaged young people. It proves these young people will take up the offer to enter into a structured contract that requires work, concentration, consistency, and long hours.

She's been such a blessing to me . . . and she believes in me, although she may get upset with me, because she loves me and wants the best for me."

Participant, Quantum Opportunities Program

SAFE PASSAGE

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A QOP Graduate:
LAKEISHA'S STORY

Lakeisha signed up for the Quantum Opportunities Program out of desperation. She was already two years behind, entering ninth grade at age 16, and completely turned off by school experiences. Her mother was eager to sign the contract because "Lakeisha don't listen to me no more. She stays out all night, hangin' on the corner, and turns up smellin' like whiskey."

At first Lakeisha found QOP difficult. She didn't know the other kids, wasn't accustomed to any kind of schedule, and had never worked a computer. Her counselor, Angela, was so pretty and nice, but different from the other adults that Lakeisha knew. When Lakeisha was late arriving at the QOP center, Angela told her, "Lakeisha, you can't achieve your goals if you just sit there and do nothing." After a couple of weeks, Lakeisha volunteered to do her community service in a home for senior citizens. She was assigned to Mrs. Atwater, visited her every Friday afternoon, and began to write down the story of the old woman's life.

Angela showed Lakeisha how to take her notes from the interviews and put them on the computer. After a year of hard work, she learned the keyboard and how to work the computer. Lakeisha's determination through the educational materials. One day, Angela asked Lakeisha to read Mrs. Atwater's story to the group. Everyone was astounded at the quality of the presentation, and for the first time Lakeisha began to believe that a career as a journalist was attainable if she worked very hard at QOP and at school. Her bank account was beginning to grow as a result of the stipends, and she could see that by the time she had spent four years in QOP and graduated from high school, it would be possible for her to continue her education. Angela worked with Lakeisha's guidance counselor in high school to make sure that her school work progressed hand-in-hand with her QOP enrichment program.

At the end of the four years in QOP, Lakeisha attributes the most significant change in her life to Angela's close attention. "She's just like a second mother to me. I will never pass this lady. She's been such a big part of my life. I don't think I'll really understand how much she means to me. This lady is God sent. She works and works and stays on me about my school and life period. She doesn't want blessings from me, and she believes in me, although she may get upset with me, because she loves me and wants the best for me."

El Puente

The Academy for Peace and Justice operated by El Puente, a community-based organization in Brooklyn, New York, is one of the cityís New Vision high schools. Codirector Luis Garden-Acosta describes the rationale for the design of this school:

Unless we were able to create a safe bridge (el puente) for growth and empowerment, our children would never be safe. But from the very beginning we knew we would have to take on the education system. If we didn't deal directly with the educational system, nothing would change.

The Academy, built into the already-existing El Puente youth development agency, is open 12 months a year from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Its founders see the Academy as an academically and developmentally focused school as opposed to a second chance or alternative school. El Puente Academy works to:

- Create a place for young people where they feel safe, respected, and cared for so they can learn.
- Build a young person's positive sense of self through the curriculum.
- Integrate book learning with community projects, with family, and with community.
- Give back to the community, nurturing a sense of responsibility in others.

The staff of El Puente is multicultural and there is no hierarchy between directors, volunteers, facilitators (teachers), and part-time staff. Every effort is made to connect schooling to real-life experiences. El Puente students pursue Environmental Community Service projects that develop math and science skills by actually measuring the toxic perils that surround them. One humanities class has made a documentary video on the dangers of a proposed incinerator for the nearby Navy Yard; an English class focuses on the hip-hop movement; and biology students work on immunization drives. A volunteer teacher and former UNICEF planner claims, "This is the most challenging job I've ever had and maybe the most useful. Every day I can see these students come alive."

The Academy provides breakfast and lunch to its students. Half of the students stay at El Puente for extended-day programs, such as tutoring, leadership, and the arts, along with others who come in from the community. El Puente is in the process of expanding its wellness center to establish a family health clinic. It also has partnerships with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Parents are encouraged to be involved with the academy through a Parent Action Center that runs leadership workshops, computer technology and other adult-education classes, and support groups.

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In its first year, the passing rate for El Puente students was 100 percent compared to nearby Eastern High School where only 25 percent of the students graduated. After the school's first 18 months, the students outscored their counterparts in other schools on basic measures of reading and mathematics.

El Puente is an example of the old-fashioned settlement house in the school or, perhaps more accurately, the school created by the settlement house. As one observer noted, schools like El Puente "aren't aiming simply to be mainstreamed into the city's factory style of education. They want to displace it." By connecting the classroom as community and the community as classroom, El Puente students join forces with community agencies to promote peace and social justice.

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WE KNOW WHAT WORKS

From a review of programs such as the three described above and hundreds of others run by schools and community agencies, it is clear that we do know what works to help young people overcome the barriers to safe passage. In order to design more effective interventions, we have to start with an understanding of the characteristics and needs of youth. Programs must focus on those more general characteristics rather than the specific behaviors such as smoking or truancy or unprotected sex. Teachers and youth workers have to build on young people's strengths and resiliency, and offer them opportunities for positive youth development.

While not all programs in schools and community agencies have been evaluated under rigorous standards, many have produced positive results that prove that they work. From these efforts, a number of components have been extracted that should be incorporated into all programs as we try to move demonstration models to scale. The provision of one-on-one individual attention, a focus on acquisition of basic cognitive skills, training in social skills and competency, and the development of multicomponent school and community interventions are especially important in designing successful programs.

School and community agency personnel have to be trained to deal with the problems of contemporary children and their families, and all practitioners have to learn how to work in collaborative relationships with each other.

WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

Coming through the door at Anywhere High School, a visitor is struck by the legacy of more than two decades of school-based prevention wars. In the main office, a bulletin board announces the start of a new AIDS program, led by a teacher who taught classes in health and nutrition when those issues were highly visible. This year's "life issues" classes are required because they cover a new state-mandated unit on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Up in the science wing, biology teachers are introducing the substance-abuse program. . . . There's only one dropout-prevention worker, where a couple of years ago there were four. He is planning to meet with the 100 or more students who have been absent more than 20 days and is frustrated because they don't show up. Meanwhile, social studies teachers have begun teaching about violence in America, and the superintendent has scheduled a special meeting of the board of education to develop a plan to combat teenage pregnancy. . . . Fragmentation breeds breakdown, and the school emerges as a hodgepodge of social initiatives with little direction or effectiveness.

– Timothy Shriver and Roger Weissberg in *Education Week*

The list of programs that don't work is almost as long as the list of those that do. Very few

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classroom-based prevention curricula have proven to be effective at changing behaviors of high-risk students (including DARE). They may provide useful information about the negative consequences of too early unprotected sex, drugs, or delinquency, and they may change attitudes, but they are not powerful enough to affect the lives of vulnerable young people. Programs fail for many reasons. The prevention curriculum may have worked when administered by the originator (usually a university-based psychologist) but when replicated by untrained and harassed school teachers, had little effect. Behavioral change programs probably work best when they are offered by health educators whose primary function is to promote healthy behaviors.

Some pioneer school reorganization models and community-based youth development programs were created by charismatic leaders, people who combine that magic touch with young people with skills in staff leadership. Replications of these programs may suffer from the lack of adequately trained personnel. Sometimes programs are underfunded and it is hard to find the second generation of leadership to work for the typical low wages of youth workers.

Many programs simply fail because the theory was wrong in the first place. For example, repeated applications of "just say no" have fallen on deaf ears. One-shot interventions such as health fairs or theatrical presentations or jail visits have no positive effect on young people. There is no "magic bullet" for changing youth behavior and ensuring safe passage. Many components have to be drawn together and shaped to fit the particular needs of the individual youth and his or her family.

MY VISION OF A SAFE PASSAGE SCHOOL

My imaginary "safe passage" school is an inner-city middle school with 1,000 students in Grades 6 to 8. The building is clean, well lit, and open from 7 a.m. till 10 p.m. seven days a week, all year round. It is run jointly by the school system and a consortium of community agencies.

Organization of the Partnership

This school is constituted through the City Board of Education, which has allowed the principal and the teachers considerable leeway in designing the curriculum. A Safe Passage Support System offers all the services needed in the school and is operated under the direction of a full-time coordinator who must facilitate the participation of community agencies. The two efforts are integrated through the Safe Passage Consortium made up of representatives of the school

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staff, the parent association, local health department, local social service agency, probation office, community police, mental health agency, Urban League, youth organizations, and students. The principal and the coordinator have joint responsibility for the school, with the turf divided between educational initiatives and support services.

SAFE PASSAGE

Quality Education

The educational program divides the school into five separate "houses" of 200 students: Arts, Business, Science and Math, Health Careers, and Classics. Eight teachers and a director are responsible for each house and the same students stay together for three years. In addition to teaching staff, experts (paid and volunteer) in these subject areas are brought in from the community to work in the various disciplines and help the teachers design the curriculum. Basic core courses must be covered (English, math, social sciences, physical sciences), but they are shaped to fit with the specialized house themes. Although the official school day runs from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., classes may run for several hours within a flexible schedule.

The Safe Passage Support System

In addition to 40 house teachers, this school has 20 guides – counselor-mentors who are assigned to houses to act as case managers for students with problems and to oversee the welfare of the others. Thus, each house has four full-time guides. This school does not organize its pupil personnel services following the traditional mode. All the psychosocial services, including guidance counseling, psychological testing, and social work, fall under the domain of the Safe Passage Support System.

Prior to entry into this school, all children are given a Safe Passage Assessment by a teacher-guide team. The parent is not present at that time, but if possible, is invited to the school for a separate interview. The youth interview and survey protocol has several functions – to find out about the child's interests and skills, and to identify problem behaviors. The interview also identifies the responsible adult and if no family member is named, the school informs the guide who is assigned to the child. The guide must make a home visit and, if necessary, act as case manager or find a suitable adult to take this responsibility.

Tracking the Children's Success

Support services are designed to meet the needs of the children and their families delineated in the Safe Passage Assessment. This is the first document in the Safe Passage Record that is set up for each student; it tracks events over the three years of enrollment. All the

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components of the school have computerized forms that are entered into the record, including achievement scores, attendance at school, use of services, family involvement, and participation in after-school activities. At the end of each school year, students write a self-evaluation that is used as a tool for planning the next year's program and future educational plans.

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Dividing Up the Work

During the summer prior to opening the doors of the Safe Passage School, the principal, teachers, and other staff, along with the coordinator and key support workers, spend many hours designing the curriculum and organizing the school. During the school year, house teachers meet for several hours weekly to work on the curriculum, adding new materials and developing special projects for students. Weekly meetings are also held for all school and support workers to share information and spark new ideas.

A specially designed curriculum is used that addresses the new morbidities (sex, drugs, and violence) and uses the latest techniques in teaching social skills. This health promotion curriculum is taught by the support staff (not by teachers) on Wednesday afternoons while the teaching staff have their planning sessions. Some of the Wednesday afternoon sessions are used for special group counseling; students are divided up into groups according to their particular needs; for example, family relations, bereavement, depression, sexual issues, substance abuse, and conflict resolution. The guides staff these sessions along with volunteers.

Universities are one source of volunteers. Each house is connected to a university, usually through one related department such as arts, sciences, medicine, or business. University faculty is encouraged to assist with curriculum development, and university students assist teachers in the school. They organize after-school activities and schoolwide events. The universities are encouraged to invite the middle school students to their campuses to see what college life has to offer and to establish connections for the future.

Services Provided On-Site

The support services envisioned for this Safe Passage School include a family resource center; health, mental health, and dental care center; after-school learning center; after-school recreation; and evening activities for parents and other community members. The family resource center houses offices for the guides as well as additional staff who can offer assistance to parents with problems concerning welfare, housing, immigration, justice, or employment. Space is available in the family resource center for parents to sit and have refreshments. Parent education books and videos are available, along with a directory of community resources and announcements of cultural and recreational events in the area.

The guides and other family workers are outstationed from community agencies, including the Department of Social Services, the Community Action Agency, and the Community Mental Health Center. Some of the guides are graduate students who commit for a year of internship. Five of the guides are from AmeriCorps, the federally sponsored program that assigns people to programs for disadvantaged youth. A specially trained community police officer is assigned to the family resource center to help families and their children deal with the justice system, but also to act as a family or child advocate through the center.

The health and mental health center provides primary health care, dental health, and mental health counseling to the students and their families. It is staffed by two full-time nurse practitioners, a medical assistant, four social workers, and two health educators. This center is associated with a local community health center that is also a managed-care organization. The school guidance counselor and school psychologist are also located in this center. Additional part-time staff include a pediatrician, dentist, dental assistant, psychiatrist, and other specialists needed for consultation. The health center has a back-up arrangement with the local hospital for emergency care and hospitalization.

The school opens at 7 a.m. for breakfast, homework help, and recreation. The after-school program is open to all the students and offers school-related programs, such as homework help, more advanced classes, computer work, or more training in English as a second language. It also offers recreational activities, such as sports, instruction in music and dance, and games. All of these activities are staffed by outstationed workers from other agencies along with volunteers.

In the evening, parents and other community members attend classes in aerobics, computers,

The support services envisioned for this Safe Passage School include a family resource center; health, mental health, and dental care center; after-school learning center; after-school recreation; and evening activities for parents and other community members

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ESL, business skills, cooking, cultural subjects, and other classes suggested by the Consortium. The parents organize frequent food events that bring whole families in for celebratory dinners.

Safe Passage Garden and Park

Across the street from the school in what was a vacant lot is the Safe Passage Garden and Park. This area has been transformed by the students, the staff, and the parents, working together to create a mini-farm for growing fresh produce and flowers, and an urban park with a little playground for neighborhood toddlers. Every student at Safe Passage has a job in the school, garden, park, or community. The students operate a play group after school for toddlers. The Business House operates the Safe Passage Store where the produce is sold as well as other products that the students believe to be commercially viable. Art works from the Arts House are also on sale here.

The Cost of Safe Passage

The academic component of the school administered by the principal is paid for by the Board of Education at the same rate as other schools – in this city, about $5,000 per child or about $5 million per year. The support services, organized by the coordinator, cost about $1,000 per child ($1 million per year), an amount pieced together from many sources. The school budget covers the guidance counselor and the psychologist. United Way underwrites the coordinator's office and some support staff. A state grant funds the health clinic, and a foundation grant funds the family resource center. Other community agencies donate personnel. The 20 guides are primarily outstationed staff from local agencies, university interns, or AmeriCorps members. Many services are performed by volunteers.

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IMPORTANT CONCEPTS IN SAFE PASSAGE SCHOOLS

WILL THIS SCHOOL ENSURE SAFE PASSAGE?

The chances are excellent that if a young person attended such a school, he or she would be more likely to succeed than someone who went to a traditional school. This vision incorporates almost every aspect of successful programs, integrated together into a student-teacher-family-centered institution. Granted, this example starts and ends with middle school. Yet all schools within a community could encompass the same principles of creativity, flexibility, and high expectations, along with one-stop access to necessary services. Even without total system changes, exposure for three years to a Safe Passage School could make a huge difference in the lives of young people.

When planning for Safe Passage, one size definitely doesn't fit all. Every community is going to have to work out its own set of solutions. Where schools are amenable to change, they will be the primary focus. In some places, after-school programs such as Quantum Opportunities will be necessary to supplement what the school can do to support disadvantaged young people and their families.

TURNING THE VISION INTO A REALITY

If you believe as I do, that schools and community agencies working together can generate new kinds of responsive Safe Passage institutions, there is plenty of work to be done. The task is immense. However, by rallying forces at all levels of our system – local, state, and national – we can each contribute to the success of our youth.

At the Local Level

- Review your own school system and other youth-serving institutions in your community to make sure they encompass the most effective practices for ensuring safe passage for all children and youth.
- Join with others in your community to start the planning process for new school/community partnerships that are responsive to changing needs.
- Recognize and reward teachers and youth workers for their significant roles in the lives of today's young people.
- Strengthen training opportunities for school administrators, teachers, and other practitioners so they understand the cross-disciplinary knowledge required for safe passage.
- Involve youth in planning for their futures.

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- Invite the local media and important decision makers into your schools and community agencies and educate them about what works and what doesn't.

At the State Level

- Ask your governor to convene a statewide commission on the status of youth that will bring together the relevant education, health, welfare, justice, and labor representation required.
- Work for legislation and funding for comprehensive youth development programs.
- Demand the creation of a technical-assistance capacity to help local groups replicate safe passage programs that work.
- Make sure that school reorganization proposals are appropriate, feasible, and well documented.
- Work for equitable distribution of school funds to ensure that disadvantaged school systems, particularly in cities and rural areas, are brought up to par.

At the National Level

- Raise the consciousness of your congress people about the importance of supporting comprehensive youth development programs.

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- Advocate expansion of the 21st Century Schools initiative that funds after-school programs and the reauthorization of Title I (funds for disadvantaged students) to further school/community partnerships.
- Join in with the Emerging Coalition on Community Schools in establishing a clearinghouse of information to assist people at the local level to gain access to "how-to" materials.
- Attend the national conference to be held in June (1998) in Washington to gain visibility for the community schools movement.

Joy G. Dryfoos is an independent researcher and writer with support from the Carnegie Corporation. This article is abstracted from *Safe Passage: Making it Through Adolescence in a Risky Society*, Oxford University Press, 1998.

1. Shriver, T., & Weissberg, R. (1996, May 15). Prevention should be a comprehensive strategy, not a fad. Education Week, p. 33.

SAFE PASSAGE

For more information, contact:

Emerging Coalition for Community Schools
Institute for Educational Leadership
1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: 202-822-8405, ext. 17
E-mail: blankm@iel.org

National Center for Schools and Communities
Fordham University
33 West 60th Street, 8th floor
New York, NY 10023
Telephone: 212-636-6699

Community Schools Technical Assistance Center
Children's Aid Society, Salome Arena Academy
4600 Broadway
New York, NY 10040
Telephone: 212-569-2880

National Center for Community Education
Web site: www.nccenet.org

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
Web site: www.ncrel.org
Telephone: 800-356-2735

Selected Safe Passage Resources

Available from NCREL

New Leaders for Tomorrow's Schools: School-Community Collaboration.
Vol. 2, No. 1 Magazine, 1996
$9.95 Order No. UNL-3-95

Urban Audio Journal: Shared Responsibilities-Changed Lives School-Linked and Community-Based Integrated Services
Audiotape and booklet, 1995
$19.95 Order No. UAJ-1-95

Policy Report: Integrated Services for Children and Families: Improving Outcomes in the Midwest Region
Policy report, 1996
Free Order No. PB-2-96

To order, call NCREL's order department toll free at 800-356-2735.

Visit NCREL's *Pathways to School Improvement* server at **www.ncrel.org/pathways.htm** for the latest research on integrating community services, educating at-risk students, and promoting parent and family involvement.

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Additional Resources

Great Transitions: Preparing Adolescents for a New Century, 1995, by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, 212-371-3200. $10.00 for the full report; executive summary available online at www.carnegie.org

Full-Service Schools, 1994, by Joy G. Dryfoos. Published by Jossey-Bass Publishers, 800-956-7739 or www.jbp.com. $29.00

Urban Sanctuaries: Neighborhood Organizations in the Lives and Futures of Inner-City Youth, 1994, by Milbrey McLaughlin, Merita Irby, and Juliet Langman. Published by Jossey-Bass Publishers, 800-956-7739 or www.jbp.com. $29.00

Future of Children, Spring 1992, by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, 415-948-3696 or www.futureofchildren.org. Free

Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers: Extending Learning in a Safe, Drug-Free Environment Before and After School by the National Community Education Association, the U.S. Department of Education, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., and the American Bar Association, 1-800-USA-LEARN. Available online at www.ed.gov

Promoting Youth Development: Strengthening the Role of Youth-Serving and Community Organizations by Karen J. Pittman, Commissioned Paper #2, Academy for Educational Development, 202-884-8000 or http://aed.org. $7.00

Building Communities From the Inside Out, 1993, by John Kretzmann and John McKnight, Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University. Published by ACTA Publications, 800-397-2282. $15.00

Eight Themes in Comprehensive Community Development: An Annotated Bibliography, 1997, by Louisa Lund, Harvard Family Resource Project, 617-496-4304. $7.00

Connecting the Dots: Progress Toward the Integration of School Reform, School-Linked Services, Parent Involvement, and Community Schools by the Institute for Educational Renewal, 513-529-6926. $10.00

The Schools We Need Now: How Parents, Families, and Communities Can Change Schools, 1997, by Laurie Olsen and Carol Dowell, California Tomorrow, 415-441-7631. $12.00

Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America, 1997, by Lisbeth Schorr. Published by Doubleday Publishers, 312-338-0900. $27.50

Together We Can Community Collaborative Wellness Kit by the Institute for Educational Leadership, 202-822-8405. $50.00

Federal Resources

U.S. Department of Education: funding opportunities, programs, publications, research and statistics, 1-800-USA-LEARN or www.ed.gov

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: funding opportunities and human services programs, 202-619-0257 or www.hhs.gov

Corporation for National Service: AmeriCorps*VISTA, Learn and Serve, Senior Corps, 202-606-5000 or www.cns.gov

Community Update: online monthly newsletter of the U.S. Department of Education, www.ed.gov/G2K/community

21st Century Community Learning Centers Initiative: visit U.S. Department of Education's home page, www.ed.gov/programs.html

Organizations

The Academy for Educational Development: training, publications, and programs in education, youth, and community development; 202-884-8000 or http://aed.org

California Tomorrow: publications on community building among culturally diverse populations; 415-441-7631

Carnegie Corporation of New York: publications and grants on child and adolescent development; 212-[illegible]-3200 or www.carnegie.org

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation: publications, support to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, 800-645-1766 (publications hotline), 810-238-5[illegible] or www.mott.org

Children's Defense Fund: publications, resource networks, and lobbying activities; 202-[illegible]-8787 or www.childrensdefense.org

Child and Family Policy Center: publications on service integration, 515-280-9027 or www.[illegible]ciowa.org

Communities in Schools: national community-in-school network; North Central Office at 317-226-1076 or www.cisnet.org/network.html

Do Something: small grants to youth leadership initiatives and youth leadership training programs, 212-523-1175 or www.dosomething.org

Family Resource Coalition: publications and services on family support and community building; 312-338-0900 or www.pavin.com/clients/frc/frcn.htm

Family Service America: information, networking, and planning services to family support programs, 800-221-3726 or www.fsanet.org

HandsNet: workshops and online information network, 202-872-1111 or www.handsnet.org

Harvard Family Research Project: publications and services on designing and evaluating family and community development programs, 617-496-4304 or http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~hfrp

Institute for Educational Leadership: publications, services, and networks in educational leadership and change, 202-822-8405 or www.iel.org

National Center for Community Education: workshops, 810-238-0463 or www.nccenet.org

National Community Education Association: publications on school-community collaboration, 703-359-8973 or www.fau.edu/divdept/coe/Comm_ed/pubs.htm

The Search Institute: Assets magazine and other youth development publications and services, 800-888-7828 or www.search-institute.org

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